

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 OES-09 TRSE-00 HEW-04 L-03
STR-07 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02
/076 W

-----004047 220009Z /73

R 210556Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9783
USDOC WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: BEXP, ETRD, JA
SUBJECT: TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE CASE NO. 4 - ABBOTT
LABORATORIES

REF: TOKYO 12566

SUMMARY: MHW BIOLOGICS DIVISION DIRECTOR FURUICHI CONFIRMED
OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT APPROVAL PROCEDURES FOR AUSRIA WOULD
BE ACCELERATED (SEE REFTEL), BUT NOTED THAT LACK OF CON-
SENSUS OVER THE ABBOTT PRODUCT'S VALUE, CONCERN ABOUT
RADIOACTIVITY, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF A NON-RADIOACTIVE
THIRD GENERATION REAGENT WILL STILL COMPROMISE AUSRIA'S
MARKET PROSPECTS. FURUICHI CONTINUED TO INSIST THAT THE
JRC HAS NEVER FORMALLY APPROACHED MHW ON AUSRIA. WHILE WE
MAY HAVE COME AS FAR AS USEFULLY CAN ON THE ABBOTT CASE, WE
HAVE ESTABLISHED GOOD CONTACTS FOR HANDLING FUTURE PROBLEMS
OF THIS KIND, AND MADE MHW MORE SENSITIVE TO THE WIDER IM-
PLICATIONS OF THEIR HANDLING OF IMPORTED PRODUCTS. END
SUMMARY.

1. DURING A RECENT DISCUSSION MR. K. FURUICHI, DIRECTOR OF
MHW'S BIOLOGICS DIVISION, CONFIRMED OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT
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APPROVAL PROCEDURES FOR AUSRIA ARE BEING ACCELERATED AND
SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY NEXT MARCH. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED
THAT MHW APPROVAL WOULD NOT NECESSARILY MEAN A SIGNIFICANT
EXPANSION IN SALES FOR THE ABBOTT PRODUCT. IN FURUICHI'S
OPINION, MARKET PROSPECTS FOR AUSRIA ARE LUCKWARM AT BEST.
THIS MAINLY DUE TO WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS A LACK OF CONSENSUS
AMONG EXPERTS ON AUSRIA'S VALUE AND CONSEQUENT LACK OF PER-

CEPTION AMONG PRACTICING DOCTORS ON THE NEED FOR A MORE SENSITIVE HEPATITIS TEST. FURUICHI ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MANY LOCAL HOSPITALS AND CLINICS ARE NOT EQUIPPED WITH THE EXPENSIVE FACILITIES NECESSARY TO HANDLE RADIOACTIVE RE-AGENTS. PARTLY FOR THIS REASON, HE SAID THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN A THIRD GENERATION NON-RADIOACTIVE TEST ("ENZYME PROCESS").

2. FURUICHI AGAIN STATED THAT THE JAPAN RED CROSS HAS NEVER FORMALLY APPROACHED MHW FOR FUNDING SUPPORT NECESSARY TO OFFICIALLY ADOPT AUSRIA. HE ATTRIBUTED THE CONFUSION THAT HAS ARISEN OVER THIS POINT TO VAGUENESS IN THE JRC'S STATEMENTS TO ABBOTT--AN AMBIGUOUS AGREEMENT TO FURTHER STUDY AUSRIA'S ACCEPTABILITY AND DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH MHW COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN MISTRANSLATED AS A PROMISE TO MAKE A FORMAL APPROACH TO MHW WITH A DECISION TO ADOPT AUSRIA.

3. FURUICHI EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION OF MINISTER BUTTON'S JULY 6 CALL ON PAB DIRECTOR-GENERAL NAKANO AND SAID THAT MHW CAN MORE CLEARLY UNDERSTAND AND TRY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS RELATING TO PHARMACEUTICAL IMPORTS THROUGH DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE EMBASSY. HE OFFERED HIS FURTHER ASSISTANCE ON THIS AND SIMILAR PROBLEMS THAT MAY OCCUR IN THE FUTURE.

4. COMMENT: FURUICHI'S REMARKS ARE CONSISTENT WITH EAR-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LIER COMMENTS ON AUSRIA'S COMMERCIAL COMPETITIVENESS AND JAPANESE CONCERNS OVER RADIOACTIVITY. HOWEVER, WE WERE NOT AWARE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A THIRD GENERATION NON-RADIO-ACTIVE TEST. AT THIS POINT, IT SEEMS TO US THAT WE HAVE COME AS FAR AS WE USEFULLY CAN ON THIS CASE. OUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS MAY NOT COINCIDE WITH THAT OF ABBOTT, BUT THE FACT THAT WE HAVE IMPRESSED ON MHW THE NEED FOR CONSIDERING ITS ACTIONS ON IMPORTED GOODS IN A WIDER CONTEXT AND HAVE ESTABLISHED USEFUL CONTACTS WITHIN MHW FOR FUTURE PROBLEMS OF THIS KIND IS IN ITSELF A WORTHWHILE ACHIEVEMENT.
MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRADE, COMMITTEES, LABORATORIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TOKYO13189
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780301-0142
Format: TEL
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780732/aaaabapq.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 38b08a6e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 TOKYO 12566
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1921400
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE CASE NO. 4 - ABBOTT LABORATORIES
TAGS: BEXP, ETRD, JA
To: STATE COM
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/38b08a6e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014